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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the beliefs and values of a pluralistic approach to social change and of four competing approaches: social Darwinism, functionalism, militancy, and conflict theory. Stressing the alienation and dogmatism of the competing approaches, the authors relate each approach to its operation in community action projects. Social Darwinists favor intergroup conflict to keep the ingroup pure, and ostracize those who do not adhere to values of competition and self-denial. Functionalists see a stratified society whose subsystems inter-relate to produce equilibrium. Militants, showing an intense distrust of establishment officials, demand first-hand experience of the poor peoples' situation. Conflict theory states that people in power use that power in their own interests but to the disadvantage of the powerless. The pluralistic approach tries to avoid these unrealistic and romantic aspects by introducing flexibility into rule systems and by using feedback to revise rules. The paper concludes with specific recommendations for community action workers. (Author/LAA)

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SOME RECURRENT DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT SOCIAL CHANGE WHICH AFFECT ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

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Everyone who takes part in a community action project assumes that certain things are true and affirms certain values. Often, these assumptions and values are not spelled out, but can be inferred only from actions. Serious quarrels often arise over different systems of assumptions and values. In this paper, we will describe the beliefs and values implied in our own "pluralistic" approach to social change, and in four competing approaches: "social Darwinist," "functionalist," "militant," and "conflict theory." The approaches which we call "social Darwinist" and "militant" are popular, extremist versions of academic functionalism and conflict theory approaches, respectively, so that the four approaches contrasting with our own really reduce to two basic approaches: functionalism and conflict theory.

The main approaches which have guided community organizing practice seemed to us to be the functionalist and conflict theory positions, both in our own experience, and in our interpretation of the community organizing literature (Coleman, 1957; Anderson, 1964; Haggstrom, 1964; Alinsky, 1965; Rezak, 1966; Schaller, 1966; Harris and Rein, 1967; Valentine, 1968; Lipsky, 1968; Alinsky, 1969; Kramer, 1969; Levitan, 1969; Moynihan, 1969; Altshuler, 1970; Dunham, 1970; Gilbert, 1970; Gurr, 1970; Kahn, 1970; Lemper and Ikeda, 1970; Warren, 1971; Rossi and Williams, 1972).

ALIENATION AND DOGMATISM

Academic functionalists and conflict theorists tend to have more moderate, middle of the road views and to be less dogmatic and less alienated than people expressing the popular social Darwinist and militant versions of these positions. Thus, academic functionalists and conflict theorists bridge the gap between the social Darwinist or "Archie Bunker" position, on the functionalist side, and the militant positon on the other extreme. Each of the two extremist views divides society sharply, in its thinking, into "good guys" like themselves and "bad guys" from the opposite extreme. On both sides, there is an effort to crush dissenters and moderates. But even though academic functionalists and conflict theorists do not share this extreme dogmatism, they --like the extremists--are in conflict with each other, though in the form of erudite academic debates rather than in the form of riots and vigilante action. What keeps this conflict going is a commitment to realize the American Dream (or its European equivalent) for oneself and those like oneself, whether one identifies with the "haves" or the "have nots." In contrast, our version of pluralism sees nothing special about the value put on power, success, and material achievement in Western culture, and seeks to integrate such values with a contrasting set of values (Slater, 1970; Putney and Putney, 1966; Andrews and Karlins, 1971) without totally rejecting the demoted values. We are more concerned with being aware of what we value, and reporting this accurately as we experience ourselves valueing it, than with any onesided attempt to deny some values while deliberately forcing ourselves to choose others.

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CG 008 312

Community action of any kind usually aims to produce greater "equality." For most functionalists, "equality" means equal opportunity to compete within the system. For conflict theorists, it generally means a classless society to be set up, someday, after the present system has been overturned. We suspect that, often, functionalism is used to rationalize inequality, while conflict theorists adopt these functionalist rationalizations as their own once they get power. We ask (i) how much "equality" it is realistic to hope for, and (ii) how, if at all, we can produce change more lasting than the vicious circulation of elites that results from revolution.

Any concern with "equality" is the exact opposite of the ultra-competetive values of laissez-faire literalism. Warren (1971) suggests that it is the Jewish and Christian teaching of "love" which prods the functionalist conscience to try to restore the ideal freedom of the market through political action, while ignoring the basic exploitativeness of the competetive market itself. With a similar motive, Marxists try to organize the exploited into a cohesive power-bloc, strong enough to end exploitation. But even within such power-blocs--or perhaps especially within them--there is still a sense of alienation and exploitedness (Coleman, 1973). To the extent that members of a political group are not genuinely committed to their group's goal (hence, to the extent that the basic personal aims of group members vary), they will feel alienated.

Sometimes it is possible for political groups to rally support from their members in spite of alienation, by creating a sense of disaster or emergency among the members. If the group is attacked from outside or if there is some other shared threat to the members, dealing with this threat becomes a shared goal, more important than the factional goals which splinter the group, and hence arousing intense group commitment. But however much we romanticize the excitement and intimate sharing which we experience in battles and disasters, few of us would choose to live in a permanent disaster if given a chance to live a less risky life. Plato (; Book II) despaired of a Republic where the citizens would be content with subsistence alone. Boulding (1972) counters Coser's (1964) argument for the "functions" of conflict by saying that what is "good" about conflict is ending it. Students in Gamson's (1972) SIMSOC's will usually choose "luxury living" in preference to maintaining a high level of "public commitment," even though public investment might produce a higher standard of living for everyone in the long run. A certain amount of privacy, autonomy, and power over one's own fate seems to be valued in spite of the fact that we also value sharing, cooperation, and intimacy (Slater, 1970; Schutz, 1960; Perls, 1969; Kagan, 1972).

The less control individuals have over their own resources, and the more they must "sacrifice" themselves to the public good, the more they value the power they still have. The alienated, including both those who are really discriminated against and those who feel threatened and deprived by boring jobs or by efforts to include the outcastes, seek to narrow the boundaries of the group and to hoard resources for their own subgroup. There thinking becomes authoritarian (Adorno et al., 1950) or dogmatic (Rokeach, 1956), with a resulting

contrast of perceived differences between the ingroup and outgroup, accompanied by assimilation or denial of perceived differences among the ingroup (Sherif and Hovland, 1961: Ch. 1). Much fallacious and wishful thinking can be understood in terms of this sort of polarization within a group which does not provide for all its members an adequate sense of personal causation (DeCharms, 1968; Coleman, 1973) and self-actualization (Seashore and Barnowe, 1972).

"Dogmatism of the left" (Rokeach, 1956) is apparent among welfare mothers who take a militant stand. They feel that they are trapped. If they get a job, their rent will go up, their foodstamps will cost more, and their welfare check will be reduced, leaving them with a very small net return for their effort. Similar reasoning is applied to the possibility of getting jobs for teenagers not in school: added family income might even disqualify the family from living in public housing. These more or less realistic perceptions are stated angrily, along with a variety of other complaints, in a way which clearly implies that "the man," the "System," or the "Establishment" has intentionally conspired to create an impossible situation for the poor, and could reverse this at will, if not intentionally evil. Neither these angry welfare recipients nor the Archie Bunkers on the social Darwinist side show much empathy for their imagined outgroup or much inclination to see the murky grey complexities and ambiguities of the largely impersonal, accidental social system in which they are actually involved.

Thus, in contrast to the rather positive picture which Alinsky (1965) draws of the downtrodden people, the realities of their greed for power suggests that militants, like social Darwinists, would be even more despotic and less enlightened in their despotism than the admittedly uncharitable "Establishment" which they seek to replace. But let us look more closely at the viewpoints we are describing.

SOCIAL DARWINISM

Social Darwinists favor intergroup conflict, and try to keep the ingroup pure. The struggle for survival demands that either people succeed in earning a living, following rules religiously, and upholding American values, or that they be shunned, ostracised, and left to die. Those who fail have some inherited defect of ability or motivation, and will only weaken the nation-race if allowed to reproduce. Only those who work hard in the spirit of the protestant ethic of competition and self-denial deserve to live.

Understandably, social Darwinists are against most community action programs. "Deserving" poor people who have fallen on bad times (e.g. widows or children hurt in accidents) may be generously supported, but from this viewpoint, "Niggers" and "foreigners" are lazy, hedonistic, immoral, and disloyal, and therefore do not deserve any help. They have not met the basic, boundary-defining standards of the group, and should be imprisoned, killed, or deported. If helped, they will threaten the jobs of virtuous, ambitious citizens, and corrupt our way of life. Besides, any help would give them an unfair advantage, since the rest of us don't expect or receive charity. (Evidence to the contrary is denied or distorted.) Given this viewpoint, social Darwinists applaud the "Americanism" of Nixon's recent declaration of peace (without honor) in the War on Poverty.

Keeping a large "inferior" outcaste may seem to salvage a shaky sense of self-worth for some in-group members. But for self-worth to be enhanced by recognition for relative success, one must make assumptions and value-commitments which imply the permanent possibility of discovering that one is also a relative failure, and of devaluing oneself accordingly (Festinger, 1954; Merton, 1957:225-280). Perhaps it is for such reasons that the sense of fulfillment which (according to the American Dream) should be the automatic result of Success is frequently lacking even among those whose position in the class structure is fairly secure (Seashore and Barnowe, 1972). Apparently, once security is guaranteed, recognition does not really matter to us as much as subtler aspects of the quality of our existence.

FUNCTIONALISM

Functionalism has dominated sociology (Friedrichs, 1970:Ch. 1), and is still very popular among sociologists. Academic functionalism shares social Darwinism's fondness for competition, while seeking to soften the impact of ostracism by defending a stratification system in which there are degrees of ostracism. Functionalists are interested in cultural transmission of a "modal personality type," rather than in Eugenics, but they still insist that there be no reward for a lack of effort, unless this can be justified by unusual circumstances.

Functionalists see society as a giant system whose sub-systems inter-relate to produce a stable, equilibrium state (Parsons and Smelser, 1967:131-140). Stable functioning is possible when members of society share common values, such as a belief in the American Dream, defining certain scarce resorces (income, occupational prestige, power, etc.) as goals.

Stratification is assumed to be a universal phenomenon, as some occupational positions are more important to the survival of the social system. These positions require greater talent and training than do other positions in the society. to induce people to fill these high-ranking positions, it is necessary to give them proportionately higher economic and/or prestige rewards.(Davis and Moore, 1945). One question which is neatly sidestepped (Davis, 1949) or ignored is the degree to which access to positions in American society is purely on the basis of achievement (as suggested in functionalist theory) rather than ascription. Functionalists often seem to assume that America is a society which minimizes such ascriptive handicaps, rewarding its members solely in proportion to their ability to contribute and their effort to do so.

Several critics of the functionalists' position have pointed out that Americans do not have equal opportunities to achieve high-ranking positions (e.g. Tumin, 1953; Buckley, 1958; Wrong, 1959). Harrington.(1964).pointed out that there is a cycle of poverty which inhibits social mobility. Studies of college entrance (Sewell and Shah, 1967) and of occupational mobility (Featherman, 1972) indicate that the social class of one's parents is a more important determinant of social status than effort to get ahead or ability. In Featherman's analysis, such supposedly "highly relevant" social psychological characteristics as measures of effort and achievement motivation did not even appear to be important mediators of the effects of the parents' spcial standing, but seemed rather to be mere epiphenomena

or side-effects. This is hardly a confirmation of the Dream of a "free" or "fair" labor market!

One way to resolve this gap between the American Dream and the reality of discrimination might be to help the poor and disadvantaged groups to overcome their initial handicaps of poor schooling and poor motivation. McLelland (1965, 1969) has developed techniques to instill need for achievement in adults in a period of ten days or two weeks. Though "ambition" and "achievement" in the sense these terms are usually used in the context of social mobility are more closely related to extrinsic motives such as need for power and need for affiliation than to need for achievement in McLelland's sense, this training does induce important parts of the core, middle-class values supposedly lacking among the poor, such as personal responsibility, deferred gratification, longterm planning, and goal-setting. Other aspects of the War on Poverty aimed to give the poor a fairer chance to compete by improving their education, job training, and job placement.

The War on Poverty was typical of many functionalists' approach to deviance. Although functionalists admit a need for some social change, they not only urge that change be gradual enough to take into account its varied consequences for the social system (Parsons, 1961) but they show a bias towards adapting individuals to the system, rather than changeing the system to meet the wishes of individuals (hield, 1954; Hogan and Dickstein, 1972), or providing a system in which individuals can be autonomous. Indeed, in their roles as citizens and as change agents, it is common for functionalists to assume that the consensual normative expectations of society and/or meeting the functional requisites for maintaining the existing social system are morally obligatory for the individual. Thus, though functionalists maintain group boundaries more gently than do social Darwinists, the message, however subtle and candy-coated, is still the same: "shape up or ship out."

Though posing as value-neutral, many functionalists actually let themselves be used by society to adjust the "maladjusted" (Friedrichs, 1970:Ch. 7). It is no accident that Parsons (1951:Ch. 7) uses the analogy of psycho-therapy as a technique for dealing with deviants: the functional value-bias is to define deviance as individual abberration. Szasz (1961), Laing (1967), Goffman (1961), and Caplan and Nelson (1973) have all pointed out similar political biases in the majority of psychiatrists and psychologists, who tend to define their job as therapeutizing "sick" people into conformity with the dominant values and mores of the culture. Within mental institutions, varying degrees of outcaste-ness are recognized and used as a basis for grading patients into groups according to their amount of "progress" or "regress" relative to the goal of inducing conformity (Goffman, 1961).

Another feature of the value-stance typical of functionalists when working with action programs is that they tend to see themselves as "Objective" observers and technicians, standing outside the systems which they analyze and manipulate in an "I-it" relation (Friedrichs, 1970:255ff; Warren, 1971; Buber, 1958). Not only do they assume, quite accurately, that they know more about the consequences of policies than those affected by these policies, but they tend to preclude consideration of values or priorities other than those which their analysis show to be the existing core values of the culture. As a

result, they (like many less scholarly social agencies) tend to assume the right to decide what is in the best interests of their clients. (Cf. Blau and Scott, 1962; and Altshuler, 1970.) This exclusion of clients from the arena of political decisions is often practically identical with the exemption, by himself, of the Experimenter, or Therapist, or Organizer from the sort of critical analysis in terms of which the opinions of mere clients, and the like, are discredited as "biased," "criminal," "manipulative," or "insane." Thus, action programs with a functionalist orientation tend to be controlled by professionals, giving little voice to the poor. Kramer (1969) discusses the ways in which members of the power elite and professionals tended to undermine the idea of "maximum feasible participation of the poor" in the War on Poverty.

MILITANCY

Popular, "militant" conflict theorists show an intense distrust of such establishment professionals and scientists, with their pretensions of superior knowledge and wisdom. Resorting to similar tactics of their own, militants discredit any claim to knowledge about poor people which is not based on first-hand experience in the situation of the poor. They claim that middle class social scientists cannot possibly understand the problems of the poor, simply because they have never been poor themselves. They ask how fat-cat researchers who live in big houses and just drive over to do some slumming during the day can possibly understand poor people. Like psychoanalysts who interpret away their patients' resistance, or behaviorist Experimenters who discredit as mental epiphenomena the thoughts of mere S's, militants refuse in advance to listen to the inevitably biased ideas of social scientists.

Many community organizers share this militant belief in the special political validity of the needs and priorities reported by the poor. Such organizers show an almost slavish obedience to what the poor people--or at least their self-styled leaders--report to be their needs, carrying the idea of maximum feasible participation to a point where they purportedly are proud to be treated like pawns and eventually to be rejected by the people whom they have organized. The organizer tries to bring together a number of people whose "personal" experience of being exploited is similar, so that these people will realize that their problems are not individual problems which can be solved individually, but problems shared with others (Lipsky, 1968). A cohesive bloc can deal more effectively with their common exploiters than can isolated individuals, whether these exploiters are the housing authority, the slumlords, the schools, employers, the police, or welfare agencies. Power is met by counter-power. It is hoped that if enough like-minded people join together, the ability of organized establishment groups to demolish angry individuals, one by one, will be ended. But there is a tendency to overlook the ability of the establishment to amass more counter-power by forming similar alliances and coalitions.

CONFLICT THEORY

As more sophisticated conflict theorists point out, the people in power do use power in their own interest, and often to the disadvantage of the powerless. Sharing the goal of ending such exploitation with the militants, conflict theorists try to use subtler forms of power to fight the establishment. One must use a variety of weapons with a Machiavellian sense of where each is most effective. Direct, angry confrontation is no longer the single, all-purpose tool, alone drastic enough to vouch for one's sincerity and authenticity as one of "the people." By relying on less forceful techniques such as bargaining, compromise, and disseminating information to the reference groups or publics of those whom they wish to affect (Lipsky, 1968), conflict-theorist politicians may lose the trust of some of their more militant followers. They realize that violence may be counterproductive if it provokes a reaction or "backlash," and they sometimes risk being labelled "Uncle Toms," or the equivalent, by arguing against rash action.

Just as they accept a variety of means, conflict theorists are willing to settle (at least temporarily) for goals other than total conquest. Indeed, it is unclear just what such theoreticians view as their ultimate aim or what they consider possible. If total conquest is the end, then the dictatorship of the proletariat is permanent. But supposedly, the dictatorship of the proletariat should eventually give way to a classless society. However, if as Dahrendorf (1966) suggests, and if as Michels (1949) says, the powerless take on the characteristics of the powerful once they acquire power, then one would expect a continual circulation of elites (Pareto, 1935) and a corresponding circulation of the depressed. If this is so, then the "changes" produced by revolution are changes in personnel rather than changes in social structure, and exploitation continues ad nauseum. Thus, speaking of the poor, Alinsky (1972:32) said, "When they get power, they'll be shits like anybody else." This expectation is supported by Kipnis's (1972) findings, and seems to be borne out by the intolerance with which Alinsky's former have-nots showed to those still beneath them (Alinsky, 1969:xi).

This seemingly pessimistic conclusion corresponds to an openness of some conflict theorists to both positive and negative findings of science. Thoroughly familiar with the ins and outs of "sociology of knowledge," or the art of discrediting one's opponents on grounds of bias, sophisticated conflict theorists apply these techniques to themselves, as well as to their opponents, and are willing to admit that even the argument of an "unqualified" person may have some merits, in spite of the poisonous well from which it comes. There is a sort of resignation to how things are, not in the spirit of evading responsibility for what can be changed, but in despair at the futility of blaming oneself and others for not doing what is impossible. But this attitude borders on our own "pluralistic" approach

PLURALISM

Our main quarrel with other positions is that they seem somewhat unrealistic and romantic in their portrayal of the haves and have-nots as the good-guys and bad-guys in the quarrel. Many "alienated"

members of our society, both militants and social Darwinists, would probably admit to despising the idea of equality and compassion were they to report their feelings honestly rather than conforming to norms which define undemocratic and un-Christian utterances as "not nice." For those raised in our competetive society, a genuine valuing of more equality in social structures competes with equally genuine desires to show others up. To the extent that we seriously propose a more equalitarian, less exploitative class structure, we question that it is feasible to reach that goal strictly through mechanical reliance on majority-rule democracy. Although we choose to listen to everyone concerned, including minorities, and to try to take everyone seriously and in good faith, we do not like the vindictive and rather violent competetiveness which we think is valued by the not-so-silent majority of Americans, left as well as right.

Some organizers might object that it is simply "wrong" not to accept the preference of the majority of "the people." We do not care whether or not we are "really" evil for disagreeing with "everyone," or even whether or not, as part-time scientists, we ought to make value judgments at all. We doubt that it is possible not to make value-judgments, but our gripe about being called "wrong" is the implication--which we want to discourage--that the political and moral choices of our opponents are somehow "justified" by faith, revelation, consensus, science, moral rationalism, or some other special authority above and beyond their status as personal and quite human choices. Choices have consequences which frequently lead people to regret their choices, later, and reasoning and empirical knowledge can most assuredly help us to avoid such regrets, but ultimately, however much we rationalize our choices in terms of general goals and values, those goals and values are our own. We might be able to explain what causes them, but we cannot give them any privileged or magical status which evades our responsibility for them as what--from moment to moment --we choose to be.

The choices we make are events which happen at particular times and places. Often, for reasons which are not entirely clear, people tend to develop rationalizations for their choices which deny personal responsibility for those choices, or at least attribute what seem to bystanders to have been personal choices to the outside world. For example, many Americans feel that they have no choice but to try to get other people to admire them and like them all the time. Or in a more commonplace example, children often claim that they didn't "intend" to do something which circumstantial evidence suggests was a "purposive" act rather than an "accident."

We value an accurate awareness, in ourselves an in other with whom we are involved, of the extent of personal responsibility. We believe that any inaccuracies in our intuitive mental maps of ourselves in relation to the situations in which we operate are likely to lead to decisions which we will later regret.

Not only is it impossible to enforce a general rule against all rules (since such a policy would abolish itself), but it is plain that making and following rules is a basic and universal human activity, without which man's most distinctive accomplishments, including language, mathematics, music, and complex social organizations, would simply vanish. On the other hand, however, it is no accident that so many of the revolts against a sense of alienation have attacked human rule-

systems, urging us to go "beyond good and evil," to "suspend the ethical," to "bracket" our moral assumptions, and to "relieve" ourselves of the irrational guilt imposed on us by our overactive "superegos." Is there some way to promote a sense of autonomy and self-actualization without taking the untenable stance of being opposed to all rules?

Maybe it is not so much rules as the inflexibility with which rules are enacted and enforced which stifles our sense of personhood. We want to introduce kindness and flexibility into rule-systems, rather than blindly defying rules or trying to live without them, as some anarchistic conflict-theorists (e.g. Marcuse,1966) have advocated. One aspect of this effort to introduce flexibility into rule-systems is the use of feedback to revise rules and plans. Much of the alienation of which people complain may result when we try to follow plans rigidly and mechanically which were a little inept in the beginning and became a gross distortion of everything which still mattered to us as time went on. Many teachers feel this way about their "course of study" or "syllabus" by the end of the semester. The use of feedback to revise plans and rules has two aspects: (i) revision of decisions about the means to be used to attain our goals as we learn more about the practical realities of a situation, and (ii) re-examination of our subjective commitment to goals, and corresponding revisions of overt expressions of our goals.

Thus, for us, the one aspect of planning to which we are willing to devote most attention and effort is to developing procedures for revising other plans and rules so that they will more closely represent our feelings and our practical knowledge as we go along. We are fairly sure that we will want to change our minds about almost everything excepting wanting to change our minds, so why not take special precautions to insure us of more freedom to make such changes?

To avoid the dogmatic tendencies which we all exhibit when feeling alienated and threatened, we advocate an effort to enact and enforce every rule in a "centered" manner (Perls, 1969), denying neither our main motives in advocating the rule nor those latent motives--in ourselves or others--to violate the rule. Rule-making usually assumes both something to be gained by following the rule, and some motivation not to follow it (Bonacich, 1972). For example, the prohibition of adultery reflects both a desire for a dependable pair-bond, and temptation by the potential pleasures of shopping around. To totally suppress and reject either aspect of our feelings in this situation will increase the feeling of alienation which results from the rule-system, whether that system requires unwavering monogamous loyalty or unwavering playboy/perfectionist non-involvement. If we remain open to those wants and needs of potential rule-violators which would motivate their violations, and acknowledge such motives as "respectable" motives in our socially defined repertoire of motives, then perhaps we will be able to find ways to fulfill these motives which will also let us fulfill those motives which were the original purposes of the rules.

A more one-sided, intolerant mode of rule-making and rule-enforcement often seems more effective in the short run, but (i) it provokes reactance (Brehm, 1966) and thus discourages us from attributing compliance with the rule to our own choice, or (ii) to the extent that we do internalize such a rule, this represents a closing of

awareness to one aspect of one's ambivalent feelings, and thus a violation of our desire to remain open and empirically honest toward all our feelings, and (iii) if this denied aspect of self is a persistent felt want or a need, we may sooner or later have to cope with it in spite of our denials and repressions. Why not openly, and with a sense of personal worth, rather than in an underlife replete with fear, shame, guilt, bitterness, and fragmented selfhood?

When functionalists analyze the functional requisites of survival for societies of human individuals (see, e.g., Aberle et al., 1950), they are analyzing the underpinnings of the real needs and stubborn (though acquired and socially maintained) felt needs which motivate people to make rules and tempt them to violate those rules. Each such need, can lead to motivated distortion or bias in our thinking about the practical realities of the social system. When unmet needs are strong enough, they lead to desparation and to onesided, repressive denial of equally real and persistent needs of other parties who get in the way of one's own satisfactions, leading to an escalation of conflict and violence. Thus, though functionalism has often been used to justify inaction, any successful change in the social system must somehow cope with the latent consequences of proposed changes. Rather than belittling the latent functions of the social structures which we want to change, we need to look those functions squarely in the eye and invent ways to deal with them if we really want a less splintered society. To the extent that some members of society feel forced to violate rules which others feel are basic conditions for full inclusion in society, deep schisms between caste-like classes will persist. But it is not self-evident that this is inevitable.

Functionalists do often use functionalism as a defense of the status quo. Some of them argue that alienated people share a culture of poverty or any of several other "deviant" subcultures. But studies such as those of Liebow (1967), Valentine (1968), and Kohn and Schooler (1973) suggest that alienation is less a conspiracy against the establishment than a realistic adjustment to the fact that the "establishment," because of the urgency of the needs met by the existing system, has built in handicaps against the alienated which make it hard or impossible for them to meet their needs while following the established rules. Situational determinants of behavior ("interests," "latent functions") become more potent than the desire of the alienated people to follow the rules, though they may feel intensely guilty as they yield to these temptations. If we train every poor man to be more ambitious, but do not provide more opportunities to realize these ambitions, we may produce increased feelings of frustration for a few weeks, but in the long run, people will give up unrealistic ambitions for goals which they have half a chance to attain, or they will invent "deviant" ways to attain the conventional goals, or both (Merton, 1957:131-160).

Although every cultural and social system must solve certain problems, that is only the beginning. Beyond bare necessities, every culture also induces certain felt needs or "values" in its members, and such values account for many of the strains in our system. On the one hand, Americans are encouraged to value compassion, love, fairness, and equal opportunity. On the other hand, they are encouraged to compete, and to do so in relation to a narrow range of standards of excellence. In itself, competition for a scarce goal is not par-

ticularly compassionate, since one man's success is the other's failure. But the intensity of competition is itself the situational determinant of an even less compassionate form of exploitation, namely, discrimination, or gross handicapping of whole classes and castes of participants. To the extent that such competition is for culturally defined goals rather than for survival needs, equality will more likely be achieved by training the rich to cooperate than by training the poor to compete. Maybe our slogan could be, "Male, chauvinist, entrepreneurial personalities of the world affiliate; you have nothing to lose but your ulcers." Less competition might reduce our rate of invention and culture change, but if the disorganization-reorganization theory of social problems is correct, this might mean less "problems" rather than hopeless stagnation. Besides, we are talking about a "relaxed," intrinsically motivated form of cooperation, with much encouragement of openness to ideas and needs of dissenting minorities within our social system, rather than the tense form of cooperation aroused by the pressing need to avert group disaster.

To the extent that the specific standards of excellence for which we compete are not survival needs, another way to reduce the intensity of competition would be to diversify the variety of goals for which people can be honored in a society. Durkheim (1964) argued that such specialization is an inevitable consequence of the competition induced by increased moral density in a population. But in fact, it seems that such diversification of the recogninzed marks of excellence has been discouraged by those who excel relative to the prevailing set of standards.

Ideally, the change agent who would follow the pluralistic approach which we have outlined would be task-oriented and concerned with getting information to modify his aims and tactics, rather than being preoccupied with emotional quarrels with outgroups. He would be tolerant rather than dogmatic. He would be open to ideas from diverse sources, but highly independent in his judgments--something of a maverick, and very creative in the sense that his attempts to solve problems would not only be unusual, but also quite likely to work. He would work to create a social system in which everyone would be "equal" in the sense of listening to everyone else's viewpoint and seeking to appreciate their motives for resisting rules. In such a system, there inevitably would be some "constitutional" or boundary-defining rules, obligatory as a condition for membership, but there would also be continuous revision of the rule-system with the explicit aim of providing alternative pathways to goals which would otherwise motivate people not to meet these basic membership requirements.

Our ideal change agent would refuse to take part in an action project unless he felt that this project had a good chance of accomplishing something which he really valued. Many projects accomplish little except to salve the public's conscience and promote the public relations of sponsoring agencies. Change of the sort we propose is not particularly popular with any group, and perhaps especially not with alienated groups. Therefore, potential sponsors would be warned by the change agent that he would not go along with views just because they were popular, but that he would make a real effort to understand and take into account the needs behind everyone's behavior, including such diverse, warring factions as multi-problem families, the moderate poor, militants, and those bureaucratic functionaries

whom even the most reactionary of the poor are inclined to hate. The point is not so much that everyone should love everyone else, but that if the social system we create does not include all of these people and allow them to let each other live with dignity, then they will still share the same eco-system, and live together fighting, as now, with gross barriers of outgroup bias against one another. The "inequality" which we propose to end is these barriers.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

If action programs are to accomplish more than a temporary commotion, while the elites circulate, on the one hand, or public relations releases and salve for the public conscience, on the other hand, then perhaps granting agencies, universities, and research institutes as well as individual change agents need to take some responsibility. As a conclusion to our analysis, here are some specific suggestions:

1. It takes time to plan projects likely to produce basic changes in the social system. Therefore, we urge granting agencies and universities to invest generously in grants for planning proposals, in preliminary explioratory studies, in carefully selected sequences of interrelated projects, and in any other innovation which will remove pressure to submit proposals hastily.

2. For similar reasons, we urge university administrators and research or action institutes to provide positive support to those who choose to refrain from taking part in action in order to develop their skills, think, do something they enjoy more, or simply out of skepticism about the longterm benefits of any kind of social action. There should be a positive effort to locate participants who genuinely enjoy action projects, rather than doing them to overcome guilt.

3. We urge funding agencies to encourage newer, more flexible models of the research and action-planning process. For pure research replication studies, it may still be appropriate to require that most details of a research design be spelled out in advance. But for original, exploratory pure research, and for all research or evaluation related to action programs, we feel that granting agencies can better insure that their money will not be wasted by urging the applicant to describe broad outlines of his goals and the processes by which he will develop and revise more detailed plans. We feel that one of the strongest features of our approach--a feature which promises to meet the conservative functionalist objection that change produces unanticipated consequences--is planned use of feedback to revise aims and tactics of an action project. We hope granting agencies will encourage this approach to planning rather than hamstrining it.

4. Cooperative projects seldom get an increase in actual man-hours proportional to the increase in actual man-hours invested. This is partly because cooperation among persons with diverse viewpoints, such as those we have described, may be impossible, and where it is possible, it requires a large investment of time and emotional energy. One way to avoid this difficulty would be to encourage more projects where one person fills all the professional roles. Practically, this would require people to combine research skills with the skills of a change agent and expertise in some practical, "problem" area such as police-community relations, or family life and child development.

5. Wherever possible, the people who are to carry out a proposal should all be involved in planning it. If "community" people are to

be involved, a preliminary sounding out of ordinary, obscure people as well as "leaders" may be very enlightening. Where key people cannot be hired or involved until later, the need to spend time working out differences and revising original plans should be explicitly planned for.

6. If the main aim of a project is for public relations or to provide ammunition for one of the sides in a political argument, it is wise to admit this and to hire someone who lacks professional scientific training to do any "research" required. The norms of science require honesty of reporting, and most social scientists, whether they are functionalists, conflict theorists, or pluralists, are strongly committed to these norms. This might be very embarassing to a sponsor with a special interest in how the results turn out. In the case of evaluation research, this suggests that--since scientifically respectable evaluation is required--the directors of the action project should have enough detachment and maturity to admit that their project, like most such projects, is likely to fall far short of its original aims. It is especially important, therefore, that such action project directors be guaranteed enough political security, job security, etc. that they can afford to fail, and will not be panicked into harrassing a poor researcher for pointing out, honestly, that the project has shortcomings.

7. In research or community action institutes, the general atmosphere should encourage "crap-detection," while discouraging self-deception and impression-management. Specifically:

a. Avoid using unnecessary jargon in proposals.

b. Don't try to fool granting agencies about qualifications of personnel, inadequate support services, hasty planning, etc.

c. Review all proposals thoroughly and skeptically to see if they are likely to work in the light of what is already known, and revise them if a different approach seems more likely to work. When it becomes clear that a proposal probably won't work, simply drop it, in spite of the time already spent on it. There is no point in following wasted effort with more effort, since the new investments are likely to be wasted too, in the long run.

d. Be suspicious when people planning or working on a project agree too easily. Consensus is rare. Encourage people to realize that disagreement is natural and that expressing misgivings may help to avoid costly mistakes, especially if these are genuine but unpopular misgivings.

e. Keep all speech-making as accurate as possible. Do not hire anyone to exaggerate the wonderful things your institute is doing, do not do so yourself, and do not encourage outsiders to do so. Trying to keep up an unreal front can waste a lot of time.

f. Encourage reporting of failures, shortcomings, and the grubby actualities of the research process as well as successes.

g. Avoid accepting funds from agencies (or from proposal review committees within agencies) which attach to many strings to their money in terms of expected findings, methods to be used, following the proposal rigidly, etc. If a project is worth doing at all, it is probably worth waiting to get the sort of liberty needed to do it properly. An unsuccessful effort to carry out a sound idea under unfavorable restrictions may create the false impression that the idea was at fault, rather than extraneous circumstances.

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